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20 February 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Conversation with Dr. Al Flax

1. Al Flax called me this morning to explain what happened in connection with the announcement of the new Under Secretary of the Air Force who is going to replace Al Flax as Director, NRO. He apparently, acting under instructions from somebody, had interviewed a substantial number of individuals who were being considered as candidates for this job. Al indicated that his role was not so much to select the candidate as to provide an explanation of what was involved in the job. He is, however, apparently impressed with the qualifications of the individual who was finally selected. He said that he has stressed in conversations with either Laird or Packard the importance of appropriate consultation with the DCI about the selection of the candidate. He attributes the fact that this was not done to an oversight. He said that Seamans called the Director on Al Flax's initiative and no significance is to be attached to the fact that the Director was notified about the appointment of the new D/NRO by the Secretary of the Air Force (and not by the Secretary of Defense).

2. Al went on to say that he was concerned about the problem of explaining the role of the Agency and the DCI in the NRP to new officials who have no understanding of the historical and other factors which have determined the relationships under the NRO. Al is writing a paper which will lay considerable stress on this point which he is preparing for the Deputy Secretary. He promised to let me have a copy of this paper although he said that time would not permit of its coordination.

3. The other purpose of the paper is to record Al Flax's ideas about how the Defense Department intelligence programs should be supervised. He comes down in favor of an Assistant to the Deputy

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NRO review(s) completed.



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Secretary to deal with these matters and his views, to me at least, seem to be substantially compatible with our own.

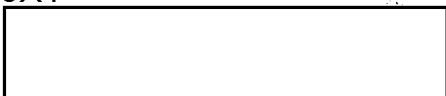
4. I asked him how he felt about the Deputy. He was extremely complimentary about Jim Reber whose services he felt have been invaluable. He said that he had rejected the idea that the Deputy had to have technical qualifications. He said that he could always go to Carl Duckett or Lloyd Lauderdale if any specific technical problems developed. Jim Reber's great contribution had been to provide a medium through which he could feel that he was in continuing touch with the intelligence community. The problem of course is to implement the provisions of the NRO agreement which require that the NRP be solely exclusive to USIB guidance. He seemed to believe that [redacted] would be well qualified to replace Jim Reber who, I gather, feels that he has been in the Pentagon long enough. 25X

5. On the subject of the Special Assistant, I asked Al why he wouldn't be well qualified for the job. He said that he was pretty well bruised from various bureaucratic encounters and thought that the Special Assistant should be somebody with an intelligence, preferably CIA, background. He said, incidentally, that he had submitted his views about the organization of the intelligence components of the Defense Department to Nitze about six months ago. They had met with such opposition from Horwitz, DDR&E, Systems Analysis, etc., etc. that Nitza had given up any effort to reorganize the Pentagon saying that this was something that could not be done in his time.

6. He does not agree with the organizational and other proposals put forward in Ivan Selin's memorandum. He thinks they are written in considerable ignorance of the nature of intelligence activities. (I am attaching a copy of this memorandum which General Carroll gave me very much under the table. A large part of Selin's memorandum consists of a pitch to be included in the review of the NRP. Al is against this.)

7. Finally he said that he did not feel that the Bureau of the Budget's effort to shoot down [redacted] would be successful. He does not feel that the [redacted] supported by Din Land, is in any way an answer to the requirement which [redacted] was designed to satisfy. (I am not sure that I understand just why this is so and am asking Bobby Taylor to explain it in non scientific legal language.) Al said that Packard had asked for a review of possibilities to slow down 25X
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or stretch [redacted] out. Al is examining this possibility but does not think much will come of it, partly at least because of the very substantial cost of procurement of the additional CORONA payloads which would be required if the initial operational date for [redacted] slips even further. Finally Al told me that the decision to continue [redacted] is reasonably firm.

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JOHN A. BROSS
D/DCI/NIPE

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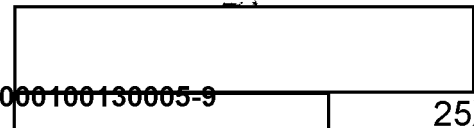
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